

House Health & Human Services

02/10/2026 01:30 PM

HB26-1024 Raising Age of Voluntary Relinquishment of Child

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
Kathy Aderhold Against themselves	<p>Regarding HB26-1024</p> <p>Dear Representatives:</p> <p>My name is Kathy Aderhold, and I am writing in opposition to HB 26-1024. I am a first mother, more commonly known as birth mother. But I was the first mother to my daughter. She was born in 1972 and I was forced to lose her to adoption. My pregnancy was a scandal and to everyone around me, this was a crisis.</p> <p>For decades, I have been involved in birth/first mother support groups and have seen firsthand the devastating unresolved grief of women who lost their children to adoption and are unable to find out what happened to them. Many of us were told that we would forget and move on with our lives, but we never forgot. How could we?</p> <p>Before retiring, I was the nurse midwife director of a Teen Mothers Pregnancy clinic. These girls were in crisis with shock, fear, and confusion about how to proceed. I tried to take away their fear and boost their self-esteem by giving them counseling and resources where they could get assistance with parenting their child. I counseled them that surrendering their baby for adoption had life-long effects for them and for their baby. Women who surrender often struggle with depression and secondary infertility. I explained how open adoption is not enforced and how difficult it can be to watch another parent your child. Adoptees have higher rates of suicide than the general public and often suffer from low self-esteem.</p> <p>Of course, true crisis pregnancy does exist. And a very small number of fearful mothers who believe that they are alone and without resources do leave their babies at the many Safe Haven locations currently in Colorado. Extending the time period for abandoning a baby only compounds the shame, stress, and grief a woman endures in this situation. It is cruel to encourage abandonment with no</p>

	<p>counseling or explanation of services that might help a woman keep her child and her self-confidence. These mothers need help, not encouragement to abandon their child.</p> <p>As for the myth of anonymity, I am a genetic genealogist and I can tell you that, with today's consumer access to DNA testing, it is easy to find biological parents. The truth will eventually come out.</p> <p>Please take the fear and shame away from the mothers so they don't spend the rest of their lives hating themselves and grieving their lost children. Support legislation that encourages parenting, not abandonment.</p> <p>I urge you to vote NO on HB 26-1024. Thank you.</p> <p>Most sincerely,</p> <p>Kathy Aderhold, RN, MSN, CNM</p>
<p>Petra De Donno For themselves</p>	<p>I support raising the limit to 30 days for relinquishment of a child to the baby save box. I think this is very important! Thank you for considering my testimony.</p>

CTTA

February 9, 2026

RE: Opposition to HB 26-1024

Dear Chair Gilchrist, Vice Chair Lieder, and Member of the House Health and Human Services Committee,

I am writing to respectfully request your NO vote on this bill which would extend the time period in which a newborn child could be abandoned without legal consequences at a Safe Haven location from 72 hours to 30 days, for the following reasons.

1. Safe Haven statutes were reportedly created to offer an emergency alternative to a possibly fatal, impulsive act by a new mother in crisis immediately after giving birth.
2. Instead, this bill promotes premeditated anonymous abandonment, and subverts truth and transparency in adoption, with lifelong consequences for the children who grow up to be adults without knowledge of their origins, ancestral identity, or medical history.
3. Safe Haven laws allow a person to anonymously abandon a child without prosecution, but this bill dangerously seeks to conflate and blur the definitions of abandonment and relinquishment, which requires pursuant to 19-5-103, C.R.S.:
 - a. counseling of the mother,
 - b. assessment of fathers' rights,
 - c. advisement about resources and alternatives that would help a mother parent her baby,
 - d. gathering and recording the names, ages, social and medical history, education background, of biological parents
 - e. petitioning a court using state-approved forms
4. Expedited relinquishment procedures are already in place if a child is less than one year old, pursuant to 19-5-103.5, C.R.S.

In short, HB 26-1024 is the next step down a slippery slope that does not protect mothers, undermines existing best practices in Colorado, ignores established statutory definitions and required procedures for relinquishment, and holds lifelong negative consequences for adoptees.

Respectfully,

Richard Uhrlaub

Richard Uhrlaub, M.Ed.

President, Coalition for Truth and Transparency in Adoption



Colorado General Assembly
Health & Human Services Committee

February 7, 2026

Re: Letter of OPPOSITION - HB26-1024 Raising Safe Haven “voluntary relinquishment” age limit from 72 hours to 30 days

Chair and Members of the Committee,

Saving Our Sisters – SOS, Incorporated (SOS) strongly opposes HB26-1024. SOS has worked directly with mothers in crisis for 14+ years. We oppose HB26-1024 because it expands an anonymous abandonment and treats it like “relinquishment,” while sidestepping Colorado’s existing adoption/relinquishment safeguards—safeguards that exist precisely because permanent family severance demands informed consent, counseling, and oversight.

Colorado already put best-practice relinquishment protections into law—HB26-1024 expands a path that bypasses them and this kind of extension is not consistent with an “immediate postpartum emergency” rationale.

Under Colorado’s relinquishment code (Title 19, Article 5), relinquishment is court-supervised and built around minimum protections, including:

- Counseling requirement: Any parent seeking to relinquish “shall” obtain counseling for themselves (and for the child as appropriate), and if the counseling hasn’t occurred, the petition must be continued until it does.
- Advisements + opportunity for independent counseling: In expedited relinquishment, the required affidavit must advise the parent of consequences, confirm they still must obtain the counseling required by §19-5-103, and advise them of the opportunity to seek independent counseling.
- Time buffer after birth: Even expedited relinquishment petitions may not be filed until at least four days after birth.
- Voluntariness safeguards: The expedited affidavit includes a statement the decision is knowing and voluntary and “not the result of threats, coercion, or undue influence.”
- Notice to the other/possible parent: Colorado requires processes to identify and provide notice to an “other birth parent” or “possible birth parent,” including service/publication rules.
- Limited revocation standard: After a relinquishment order, revocation is limited and typically requires proof of fraud or duress within a defined period.

These are not technicalities. They are the state’s own acknowledgment that relinquishment is high-stakes and requires guardrails: counseling, time, advisement, voluntariness protections, and due process.

Safe Haven is fundamentally different—and HB26-1024 expands the “different” part.

Colorado’s Safe Haven statute is designed for emergency abandonment: a parent may deliver a child to a firefighter or hospital/community clinic emergency center staff; staff take temporary physical custody without a court order; law enforcement and the county are notified; and the statute declares the county “shall” place the child with a potential adoptive parent as soon as possible and proceed toward termination as soon as lawfully possible. Safe Haven materials also describe the surrender as anonymous.

Colorado already knows what ethical relinquishment requires—its adoption code says so.



Saving Our Sisters

Expanding Safe Haven to 30 days contradicts those principles and increases the likelihood that temporary crises become permanent separations.

It's for these reasons, SOS urges the committee to vote NO on HB26-1024.

Respectfully submitted,
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